UNITED NATIONS

# Daily Highlights

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## FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General meets with Foreign Ministers of Israel and Egypt in Zurich; concludes three-week visit to Europe.

+ Secretary-General expresses solidarity with people of Sarajevo; reiterates commitment to alleviation of suffering and peaceful settlement of 1,000-day old conflict.

+ UNHCR and Government of Zaire discuss arrangements to enhance security in Rwandese refugee camps; Secretary-General says peace-keeping operation is not feasible.

+ Special Envoy for Georgia to convene negotiations towards comprehensive settlement of Georgian/Abkhaz conflict in Geneva on 7 February.

+ Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs meets with URNG leaders in Mexico City; to meet with both Guatemalan parties in New York next week.

+ New UNPROFOR Force Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina meets with parties in Sarajevo and Pale; seeks release of Bosnian journalist seized by Serb police in Sarajevo.

+ Senior prosecutors appointed to International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today concluded a three-week stay in Europe and departed for New York, according to a United Nations spokesman. Before leaving Zurich airport, he met with the Foreign Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, and discussed the Middle East peace process. They were then joined for further talks by Foreign Minister Amre Moussa of Egypt.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Over the last three weeks, the Secretary-General paid official visits to Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Germany. He also had numerous meetings in Geneva, and addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos.

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The Secretary-General has expressed his solidarity with and sympathy for the people of Sarajevo, on the one thousandth day since the Bosnian capital was engulfed by war. In a statement issued today, he noted that he had witnessed the suffering and the courage of Sarajevo's people at first hand. He reiterated his commitment to the continuing effort to alleviate their plight and to settle the conflict peacefully.

Through the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other agencies, United Nations humanitarian assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina had saved thousands of lives, he noted. In the course of their service, 70 men and women of UNPROFOR had given their lives. The United Nations Special Coordinator's Office for the Restoration of Essential Services was now working with Sarajevans to help rebuild their shattered city and restore some normalcy to their lives.

Since the December 1994 cessation of hostilities agreement, there had been a dramatic reduction in the level of violence in Sarajevo, the Secretary-General continued. Only this week, the parties had agreed to open the Sarajevo airport routes, and had released nearly 100 prisoners. Those positive developments had created an opportunity which the international community and the parties must seize and build upon.

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The establishment of a peace-keeping operation to enhance security in Rwandese refugee camps in Zaire is not feasible at present, according to the Secretary-General. In a report to the Security Council dated 25 January, he said the operation under consideration since last November would have required more than the 3,000 to 5,000 troops originally estimated. However, after consultations with some 60 potential troop contributors, only one country had formally offered a unit. Only four countries had expressed an interest in providing civilian police for a more modest deployment.

Peace-keeping was essentially an instrument for conflict management and resolution, he continued. It had not been designed or used to ensure security in refugee camps. Nevertheless, the innocent civilians who had fled Rwanda were now exposed to intimidation and violence in the camps, and deserved the continued attention and assistance of the international community. Better security was also needed to create conditions for the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Government of Zaire were working on arrangements to enhance security in the camps. Acting under its refugee

protection and humanitarian assistance mandate, UNHCR had dispatched a Special Envoy to Kinshasa for that purpose.

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Following consultations with the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, Special Envoy Edouard Brunner will convene a further round of negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict in Geneva from 7 to 9 February. The negotiations will address the questions of the political status of Abkhazia and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

As on previous occasions, the negotiations will be attended by representatives of the Russian Federation, in the role of facilitator, and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

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The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding, has had meetings in Mexico City with the leaders of the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), officials of the Mexican Foreign Ministry, and representatives of the Group of Friends of the Guatemalan peace process (Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, United States and Venezuela). He met with officials of the Guatemalan Government in Guatemala City earlier in the week.

Mr. Goulding discussed with the URNG proposals put forward by the United Nations to revitalize the peace process and to facilitate the timely signing of a firm and lasting peace accord. It was expected that he would meet with the parties in New York in the coming week to develop those proposals further.

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The new Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith, met yesterday with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo. He met today with Bosnian Serb leaders in Pale, and attempted to secure the release of a Bosnian journalist seized yesterday in Sarajevo.

The journalist was taken from an UNPFOROR armoured personnel carrier by Bosnian Serb police at a checkpoint in the city. A French UNPROFOR officer succeeded in preventing the seizure of three international journalists travelling in the same vehicle. The United Nations immediately began negotiations to secure the release of the Bosnian journalist.

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The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Justice Richard Goldstone, today announced the appointment of two senior prosecutors, Eric Ostberg of Sweden and Minna Schrag of the United States. Together with Grant Niemann of Australia, they will form the Prosecution Section, and will present evidence and argue legal points before the Tribunal.

Justice Goldstone noted that the Tribunal now had a full complement of senior trial lawyers to present and argue cases against those responsible for serious war crimes.

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